

## CYRUS ALI ZARGAR

AL-GHAZALI DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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4000 Central Florida Blvd. • Orlando, FL 32816-1352 • (407) 823-2798 • zargar@ucf.edu

### EDUCATION

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- PhD** University of California, Berkeley – Near Eastern Studies, 2008  
Advisors: Hamid Algar, James T. Monroe, Wali Ahmadi, and Charles Hirschkind.
- MA** University of California, Berkeley – Near Eastern Studies, 2003 (Highest Distinction)
- BA** University of California, Los Angeles – English literature, Latin minor, 2000 (Summa Cum Laude)

### RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Classical Sufism / Islamic Philosophy / Arabic and Persian Sufi Literature / Ethics in Literature and Film

### BOOK PUBLICATIONS

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*Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writings of Ibn 'Arabi and 'Iraqi*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2011.

*Sufi Aesthetics* argues that the interpretive keys to erotic Sufi poems and their medieval commentaries lie in understanding Sufi theories of perception and beauty.

Reviewed in *the Journal of the American Academy of Religion*; *Reviews in Religion & Theology*; *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*; and *the Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies*.

Translation into Persian by 'Alī-Riḍā Riḍāyat (published by Afkār Press) is forthcoming.

*The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism*. London: Oneworld, December 2017.

*The Polished Mirror* introduces readers to Islam's two major ethical traditions focused on virtue, using narratives to unravel theoretical writings.

*Religion of Love: Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 1221) and the Sufi Tradition.* Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, forthcoming.

This monograph considers space, time, and praxis in the Persian Sufi poetry of 'Aṭṭār, focusing on the development of sacred symbols.

## ARTICLE PUBLICATIONS

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"The Hiddenness of the Imam: Absence and Love in Twelver Shi'i Islam." *Messianic Figurations: Abrahamic and Non-Abrahamic Mediators of the Eschatological*, ed. Francis Xavier Clooney, Kimberley Christine Patton, and Kurt Anders Richardson. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Forthcoming.

"The Imām's Ethical Body: Embodied Virtue and the Human Constitution in Shī'ī Philosophy." *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life in Shī'ah Islam*, ed. Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad and Sajjad H. Rizvi. London: The Shī'ah Institute Press, 2017. Pp. 208-240.

"Allegory and Ambiguity in the Films of Majid Majidi: A Theodicy of Meaning." *Journal of Religion & Film* 20:1 (2016), Article 3.

"Revealing Revisions: Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's Four Versions of al-Kalimāt al-Maknūnah." *Iranian Studies* 47:2 (2014), pp. 241-262.

"Satiric Traversals in the Comedy of Mehran Modiri: Space, Irony, and National Allegory on Iranian Television." *Humor and Middle Eastern Cinema*, ed. Gayatri Devi and Najat Rahman. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2014. Pp. 79-103.

"Water." *Islamic Images and Ideas: Essays on Sacred Symbolism*, ed. John Andrew Morrow. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press, 2014. Pp. 112-123.

"The Poetics of Shuhūd: Ibn al-'Arabī's 'Intuitive, Enamored Heart' and the Composition of Erotic Poetry." *The Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 54:2 (2013), pp. 13-36.

"The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara (A Study and Translation)." *The Muslim World* 103:1 (2013), pp. 107-130.

"Kašf o Šohud." *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Center for Iranian Studies). Fascicle XV/6 (2011), pp. 668-673.

"Two Illustrated Manuscripts of the Qajar Period: Identification and Introductory Discussion." *Liberal Arts through the AGES*, ed. Catherine Carter Goebel. Rock Island, IL: Augustana College, 2011. Pp. 66-67. Illustrations '34A and '34B.

"The Virtues of Hunger in Classical Islamic Thought and Its Relevance for a Culture of Satiety." *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 9.4 (2009), Web.

"The Satiric Method of Ibn Dāniyāl: Morality and Anti-Morality in Ṭayf al-Khayāl." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 37.1 (2006), pp. 68-108.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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Illumination in Islam and the Arts: Mysticism and Cinema

Paper presentation, "A Metaphysics of Sight in Majīd Majīdī's *The Willow Tree*" February 2018 (Johns Hopkins University)

Rationality and Language in Islamic Thought

Paper presentation, "Futuwwa as Situated Virtue in the Thought of Ibn al-Arabī" November 2017 (New York University, Abu Dhabi)

Mediterranean Seminar (Mysticism and Devotion)

Paper Respondent to Anna Akasoy, "Imaginary Spaces of Devotion in Andalusī Mystical Poetry." April, 2017 (Colorado University, Boulder)

American Academy of Religion

Panel Respondent, "The Sufi Tradition in Formation." November, 2015 (Atlanta, Islamic Mysticism Group)

"The Hiddenness of the Imam: Reconciling Absence and Guidance." November, 2012 (Panel on Comparative Messianism)

"The Imam in the Text: Fayḍ al-Kāshānī and the Reclamation of Shī'ī 'Irfān." November, 2009

The Shi'ah Institute

"The Imām's Ethical Body: Embodied Virtue and the Human Constitution according to Mullā Ṣadrā and Fayḍ Kāshānī." September, 2015 (Warburg Institute, London)

International Conference on Religion and Film

"Ambiguity and Allegory in the Films of Majid Majidi: A Theodicy of Meaning." May, 2015  
(Istanbul, Department of Cultural and Social Affairs and University of Nebraska, Omaha)

#### The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

"Bird from the Garden of Meanings: Soul and Speech in Ibn 'Arabī's Reading of Jesus." November, 2014 (Zaytuna College, Berkeley, Symposium, "Symbols of Transformation")

"The Poetics of Shuhūd: Experience and Expressing Human-Divine Beauty." May, 2013  
(University of Oxford, Symposium, "Mystical Perception and Beauty")

#### Society for Cinema & Media Studies

"Ironic Distance in the Comedy of Mehran Modiri: Contemporary Iranian Life through an Outsider's Eyes." March, 2012

#### Middle East Studies Association

"The Living Qalandar Persona: The Amalgam of Art and Life in Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī." November 2010

"Hidden Narrative in Hafiz." November, 2009

"The Poetry of Ṭayf al-Khayāl in Context: Power and the Corruption of Sacred Language." November, 2005

"Volitional Death and an Existence More Real: Theoretical Suggestions in Kubrā's Aqrab al-ṭuruq ilā Allāh." November, 2004

"Irony and the Sung Refrain." November, 2003

#### The Graduate Medievalists at Berkeley (The Graduate Student and Faculty Colloquium Series)

"Morality and Anti-Morality in Ṭayf al-Khayāl: An Introduction to the Satiric Method of Ibn Dāniyāl." May 2004

### LANGUAGES

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English (native)

Arabic (mastery, especially classical)

Persian (near-native)

Reading knowledge of German, French, and Latin

## ADMINISTRATION

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Co-Director of Honors Programs, May 2018

Augustana College

Director of Interreligious Leadership Experiential Minor, 2017-2018

Augustana College

## TEACHING

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**University of Central Florida**, Department of Philosophy

Associate Professor, hired May 2018 (Al-Ghazali Distinguished Professor)

*World Religions*

*Moses, Jesus, Muhammad*

*Islam*

*Medieval Philosophy*

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**Augustana College**, Department of Religion

Associate Professor, 2014-2018

Assistant Professor, 2008-2014

Courses include:

*Encountering Religion: Theories and Major World Religions*

*Islam: An Introduction*

*Islamic Mysticism*

*The Formative History and Development of Islam*

*Muslim Literary Worlds: Islamic ethics in Muslim literature*

*Intro to the Literature of the Medieval/Modern Middle East*

*Comparative Mystical Poetics*

*Christianity and Islam in Dialogue*

*Classical and Qur'anic Arabic*

*Persian*

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**San Francisco State University**, Department of Philosophy

Adjunct Professor, 2006

Course: *Islamic Mysticism*

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**University of California, Berkeley**, Department of Near Eastern Studies

Instructor, 2006-2008

Courses:

*First-Year Persian*  
*Intensive First-Year Persian*

## **GRADUATE ADVISING**

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Graduate Theological Union

Doctoral Examination Committee Member for Zachary Markwith  
Fellow members: Arthur Holder, Judith Berling  
May 2017

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Member for Zachary Markwith  
Fellow members: Arthur Holder, Judith Berling  
Current

## **UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING**

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Muslim Student Advisor, 2008-2018

Augustana College

Middle East Cultural Appreciation Society, 2013-2016 (created in 2013 under my direction)

Augustana College

Interfaith Dialogue Advisor, 2008-2018

Augustana College

Religion Major Advisor, 2008-2018

Augustana College

Member, Middle East Advisory Council, 2014-2016

St. Ambrose University

First-Year Student Advisor, 2009-2010; 2012-2014; 2017-2018

Augustana College

## **TEACHING AWARDS, CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS**

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The Timed Analysis Essay: Benefits and Methods

September 2012 (Augustana College)

"Self-Evaluations," Augustana Center for Teaching & Learning Workshop

November 2009 (Augustana College)

"Innovations in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Liberal Arts Colleges"

March, 2009 (Wabash College, workshops)

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award

2006-2007 (UC Berkeley)

## COMMITTEE WORK

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Islamic Mysticism Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion, 2014-present  
Interfaith Steering Committee, Augustana College, 2008-2018  
Freistat Center Council Member, Augustana College, January 2016-2018  
Augustana Future Initiatives Think Tank (AFITT) 2016-2017  
Enrollment Committee, 2011-2016  
Honors Committee, 2012-2018  
Jaeke Committee, 2010-2017  
Student Research Committee (Winter 2013 - May 2015)  
Search Committee for Semester Transition Coordinator (Winter 2016-17)  
Search Committee for Communication Studies Search (Winter 2016-2017)

## MEMBERSHIPS

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American Academy of Religion  
Middle East Studies Association  
Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society  
The Shī'ah Institute (Research Fellow)

## INVITED LECTURES

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Bridging Cultures Bookshelf: Muslim Journeys (National Endowment for the Humanities)  
Featured Speaker, Five Lectures / Moline Library, Moline, IL, 2014

Bridging Cultures Bookshelf: Muslim Journeys (National Endowment for the Humanities)  
Featured Speaker, Four Lectures / Bettendorf Library, Bettendorf, IA, 2014

"The Virtue Underlying All Virtues: Volitional Death in the Thought of Najm al-Din Kubra"  
Augustana College, Celebration of Research, 2/18/13

"Understanding Islam and Muslims, Rising Above Stereotypes"  
Grace Lutheran Church, Davenport IA, 11/4/12

"Islamic Mysticism"  
The Satva Center, Rock Island IL, 10/13/12

"Jihad in the Context of Islamic Ethics: Mercy and Justice, Duty and Consequence"

Augustana Center for the Study of Ethics, 4/2/12

"Muslim-American Responses to the Tragedy of 9/11"  
Augustana College, 9/10/11

"The Qur'an's Major Themes"  
Zion Lutheran Church, Davenport IA, 3/6/11

"Adam and Human Origins"  
First Presbyterian Church, Davenport IA, 3/27/11

"Mary and Gender in the Qur'an"  
First Presbyterian Church, Davenport IA, 4/3/11

"Muslim Beliefs and Practices"  
First Presbyterian Church, Davenport IA, 4/10/11

"Jihad and its Interpretations"  
First Presbyterian Church, Davenport IA, 4/17/11

"Hospitalization and Muslim Beliefs/Practices"  
Trinity Medical Center, West Campus, 1/25/10

Instructor, CommUniversity: "Introduction to Islam"  
St. Ambrose University, From 2/7/10 to 2/28/10; 2/6/11 to 2/27/11; 2/5/12 to 2/26/12

"Suffering, Death, and Hope: Muslim and Christian Perspectives"  
The Catholic Benedictine Sisters of St. Mary Monastery, Rock Island IL, 3/8/10

Convocation, "What can we learn from Iran today?"  
Augustana College, 12/10/09

"Learning from the Sufis How to Love God"  
Annual Augustana Day for ELCA Pastors, 10/08/09

"Women and Gender in Early Muslim Sources"  
Zion Lutheran Church, Davenport IA, 2/15/09

"On Hunger and Humility"  
Reflection Series, Augustana College, 9/23/08

Convocation, "From Antiquity to Modernity"  
Augustana College, Winter Terms, 2008-2011



## **FELLOWSHIPS , GRANTS, AND AWARDS**

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Interfaith Youth Core (the Teagle Foundation)

IFYC Interfaith and Pre-Professional Curricular Grant (Cyrus Zargar was grant-writer on behalf of Augustana College), 2016

Augustana College

Presidential Research Fellowship, 2013  
New Faculty Research Grant, 2008 – 2011

University of California, Berkeley

Dean's Normative Time Fellowship, 2005-2006  
Mellon Travel Grant, 2005  
Mellon Travel Grant, 2003  
Graduated Highest Distinction  
Predoctoral Humanities Award, 2001-2005  
Near Eastern Studies Award Supplement

University of California, Los Angeles

Summa Cum Laude  
Dean's Honor List (1997 – 2000)  
UCLA Daily Bruin, Editor-in-Chief's Achievement Award (1998-1999)  
The Phi Beta Kappa Society, inaugurated 1999

## **EDITING**

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Book Review Editor

The Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, 2014-present

Editor-in-Chief

The Journal of Associated Graduates in Near Eastern Studies, Fall 2003 – Fall 2008

## **REFERENCES UPON REQUEST**